**Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Apostle to the Indians, Session 1, Significance, Brith to Roxbury  
Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

**1. Abstract of Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Session 1, Significance, Birth to Roxbury, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**  
  
 This audio transcript from Dr. Ted Hildebrandt's teaching series introduces John Eliot (1604-1690), known as the Apostle to the Indians. The initial session outlines Eliot's significance, evidenced by his depiction in Boston monuments and his pivotal role in early American publications like the Bay Psalm Book and the first Bible printed in America, translated into the Algonquin language. It further explores his early life in England, his education at Cambridge, his formative spiritual experience with Thomas Hooker, and his subsequent ministry in the First Church of Boston and later in Roxbury. The lecture also touches on Eliot's personal life, including his marriage and character, his commitment to education through the establishment of schools like Roxbury Latin, his views on democracy, and his involvement in controversies like the Anne Hutchinson trial and the suppression of his book "The Christian Commonwealth." Finally, it sets the stage for Eliot's extensive mission to the Native American population, examining the context of English views on indigenous peoples, the challenges he faced, and the significant figures who supported his efforts to spread Christianity and translate the Bible.

**2. 25 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of   
Dr. Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Session 1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Church History 🡪 John Eliot).**



**3. Briefing Document: Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Session 1, Significance, Birth to Roxbury**  
  
Top of Form

Briefing Document: John Eliot, Apostle to the Indians - Session 1 Review

**Date:** October 26, 2023 **Source:** Excerpts from "Eliot\_EN\_Ses01.pdf" by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt

**Overview:**

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented in the first session of Dr. Ted Hildebrandt's teaching on the life and work of John Eliot (1604-1690), known as the Apostle to the Indians. This session covers Eliot's significance, his English roots, his arrival in America, his ministry in Boston, and his eventual settlement and ministry in the First Church of Roxbury. The session lays the groundwork for understanding Eliot's later impactful work with the Native American populations.

**Main Themes and Important Ideas:**

**1. Significance of John Eliot:**

* Eliot is presented as a highly significant figure in early American history, recognized through various lasting memorials.
* **Congregational Archive and Library Bas-Relief:** Eliot preaching to Native Americans in Nonantum (Newton, MA in 1646) is one of four bas-reliefs outside the Congregational Archive and Library in Boston, symbolizing "community witness and philanthropy of the early settlers and their passion for going after and spreading the gospel to the Indians."
* **Hall of Flags Mural:** A mural in the Golden Dome Statehouse on Beacon Hill depicts John Eliot speaking to the Indians, further highlighting his recognized historical importance.
* **The Bay Psalm Book (1640):** Eliot was a key translator of the first book printed in America, the Bay Psalm Book, which put the Psalter into rhyme for congregational singing. This distinguishes the Puritans (who aimed to purify the Anglican church) from the Pilgrims (separatists).
* **Translation of the Bible into Algonquin (1663):** This is highlighted as Eliot's "magnum opus" and the first Bible printed in America. It underscores his dedication to reaching the Native American population.
* **Founding of Roxbury Latin School (1645):** This enduring institution demonstrates Eliot's commitment to education. The school still sends a significant percentage of its graduates to Harvard.
* **Development of 14 Praying Indian Villages:** Starting with Natick, Eliot established communities for converted Native Americans, providing them with land and the opportunity to develop their own towns. These efforts were overseen by Daniel Gookin.
* **Moniker "Apostle to the Indians":** This title, bestowed upon Eliot in 1660 by Thomas Thorogood, reflects his primary and lasting legacy.
* **Guiding Quote:** "You will not do incredible things without an incredible dream." This quote sets the tone for understanding Eliot's ambitious and impactful life.

**2. English Roots (1604-1631):**

* **Birth and Family:** Born in Whitford, England in August 1604, Eliot was the third child of Bennett and Lattice Eliot, who were landowners. His early life in Nazeing was marked by godly parents who "season my first times with the fear of God, the word and prayer."
* **Education at Cambridge University (1618-1625):** He attended Jesus College, a more mainstream institution compared to the Puritan-leaning Emanuel College. He received his AB degree in 1622 but left before completing his MA due to the plague in 1625. He maintained a connection with Jesus College, later sending them a copy of his Indian Bible.
* **Influence of Thomas Hooker:** During a six-year interlude after Cambridge, Eliot taught at Thomas Hooker's school in Little Baddow. This period is viewed as Eliot's "conversion experience," where he saw "the power of godliness in its lovely vigor and efficacy" in Hooker. Hooker, a strong Puritan who later founded Hartford, had a tremendous impact on Eliot's spiritual development.
* **First Generation Settlers:** Eliot is placed within the context of other significant first-generation figures like William Bradford, John Cotton, and Thomas Shepard, who collectively shaped early America.

**3. Arrival in America and Ministry in Boston and Roxbury (1631-1646):**

* **Voyage to America (1631):** Eliot sailed to Boston on the ship "Lion," a 10-week journey during which he served as the minister on board. The ship also carried the wife and children of John Winthrop and vital supplies for the struggling Boston colony.
* **Ministry at the First Church of Boston:** Eliot initially filled in as minister at the First Church of Boston while John Wilson returned to England.
* **Settlement in Roxbury (1632):** Eliot moved to Roxbury, where his family from Nazeing settled, and co-founded the First Church of Roxbury. He served there as a teacher under the ministry of Thomas Weld for nearly 60 years. The current Fifth Meeting House stands on the site of the original 20x30 foot structure, and "Eliot Square" in Roxbury commemorates his contributions.
* **Marriage to Hannah Mumford (1632):** Eliot married Hannah Mumford in the first marriage at the Roxbury church. She is described as a remarkable woman known for her hospitality and nursing skills, a true partner to Eliot.
* **Focus on Roxbury Church (1632-1646):** For the 12-14 years before engaging in his Indian work, Eliot focused on his ministry in the Roxbury church.

**4. Character Qualities of John Eliot:**

* **Practical:** He drew spiritual lessons from everyday experiences.
* **Mourning:** He possessed a sense of gravity and encouraged it in his students ("look to it that you be mourning birds").
* **Temperate:** He preferred water over wine, demonstrating moderation.
* **Hospitable:** He famously invited a Jesuit missionary to stay in his home for the winter, showcasing his tolerance and kindness ("mi casa, su casa").
* **Diligent and Persistent:** His translation of the Bible into Algonquin exemplifies his strong work ethic ("T-O-I-L-E").
* **Humble:** He viewed himself as "but a shrub in the wilderness" despite his significant achievements.

**5. Passion for Education:**

* Eliot believed education was crucial for the permanence of both his congregation and his work with the Native Americans.
* He advocated for financial support for schoolmasters and mistresses.
* Roxbury under Eliot's influence produced a significant number of scholars for Harvard College.
* He created catechisms for children.
* He founded the Roxbury Latin School (oldest continuous school in America), the Jamaica Plain School (an early integrated school), and was instrumental in the establishment of the Indian College at Harvard University (though it was later demolished). The printing press in the basement of the Indian College was used to print Eliot's Bible.

**6. Views on Democracy:**

* Eliot believed in the principle of the people making decisions, as demonstrated by his objection to John Winthrop consulting only ministers on a peace treaty with Native Americans. He felt the general populace should be involved.

**7. Controversies:**

* **Ann Hutchinson Trial (1637-38):** Eliot aligned himself with the orthodox party against Ann Hutchinson, who challenged the teachings of many New England ministers.
* **"The Christian Commonwealth" (1659):** This book, published in England, advocated a governmental structure based on Exodus 18:25 (rulers of tens, fifties, hundreds, thousands). This was seen as a challenge to the English monarchy and was ordered suppressed, marking Eliot's "first canceled document." However, he later implemented similar principles in the structure of the praying Indian villages ("communion of churches").

**8. The Bay Psalm Book:**

* The first book printed in America (1640), it was a metrical translation of the Psalms, with Eliot being one of the key translators. Cotton Mather offered somewhat critical but also acknowledging poetic commentary on the translation efforts of Eliot, Weld, and Mather. The book was designed to be sung.

**9. Early Attitudes Towards Native Americans and the Gospel:**

* Early English settlers, including the Pilgrims and Puritans, held the belief that one of the "principal ends" of their plantation was "the conversion of the people of these parts unto the true worship of God and the Christian religion."
* The Massachusetts seal depicted an Indian saying, "Come over and help us," a direct quote from Acts 16:9, interpreted as a call to bring the gospel.
* There was a prevalent belief that the Native Americans were the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, influencing the approach to conversion. This was supported by observed cultural similarities (anointing, foot washing, dancing, parables, the possible use of "hallelujah," and some practices resembling Jewish dietary laws).

**10. Other Early Efforts in Evangelizing Native Americans:**

* **Roger Williams:** Preached to Native Americans in their own language in Plymouth and Rhode Island and published "A Key into the Language of America" (1643), a lexicon of Indian terms.
* **Thomas Mayhew:** Ministered to Native Americans on Martha's Vineyard, even more extensively in their own language than Eliot initially. His family continued this work for three generations. Martha's Vineyard did not experience the same devastation to Indian relations during King Philip's War.

**11. Eliot's Collaborators and Supporters:**

* **Richard Gookin:** Oversaw the praying Indian villages and was a close friend.
* **Thomas Shepherd:** Supported Eliot's preaching to the Indians in their own language.
* **Edward Winslow:** Based in England, he facilitated the publication and dissemination of Eliot's work, garnering support for his endeavors, including the printing of the Bible.
* **Richard Boyle:** A wealthy philosopher who headed the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, instrumental in funding Eliot's work.
* **Richard Baxter:** A Puritan theologian with whom Eliot maintained a spiritual correspondence and whose works he translated into Algonquin.

**12. Resistance to Praying Indians:**

* **Clash with Settlers:** Differences in land use (settled agriculture vs. nomadic hunting and fishing) led to conflict and resentment from settlers who viewed the praying Indians as trespassing or disruptive.
* **Opposition from Native American Leaders:** Sachems (chiefs) and Powwows (priests) resisted the conversion efforts as it undermined their traditional authority and way of life.

**13. Learning the Algonquin Language:**

* Eliot was aided by **Kakano**, a Native American captive who lived with Eliot and taught him the Algonquin (Swampinong) dialect. Kakano's bilingualism was crucial for Eliot's language acquisition and translation work.

**Conclusion of Session 1:**

Session one establishes John Eliot as a pivotal figure in early American history with a profound commitment to spreading the Christian gospel to the Native American population. It explores his English background, his ministerial beginnings in the Boston and Roxbury churches, and the development of his key character traits and passions, particularly for education. The session also introduces the early context of English-Native American relations, the initial support for missionary efforts, the emergence of resistance, and the crucial role of Kakano in enabling Eliot's linguistic endeavors. The stage is set for the subsequent sessions to delve into Eliot's direct engagement with Native American communities, the establishment of praying Indian villages, the translation and printing of the Bible, and the impact of King Philip's War on his mission.

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**4.** **Study Guide: Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Session 1, Significance, Birth to Roxbury**

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Study Guide: John Eliot, Session 1

**Key Themes:**

* The significance of John Eliot and his lasting impact on American history.
* Eliot's early life and formative influences in England.
* His arrival in America and establishment as a minister in Boston and Roxbury.
* The early stages of his interest and eventual engagement with the Native American population.
* The cultural and religious context of early colonial interactions with Native Americans.

**Quiz:**

1. What was John Eliot's well-known moniker, and why was he given this title?
2. Name three significant historical elements depicted in the bas-reliefs outside the Congregational Archive and Library in Boston, and briefly explain why these are important for understanding early American history.
3. Explain the key difference between the Pilgrims and the Puritans, as discussed in the context of the Bay Psalm Book.
4. Besides translating the Bible, what other significant educational contributions did John Eliot make in the early Massachusetts Bay Colony? Name at least two.
5. Describe John Eliot's upbringing in England, including the names of his parents and the significance he attributed to his early life.
6. How did Thomas Hooker influence John Eliot's spiritual development, and where did this significant interaction take place?
7. Recount the circumstances of John Eliot's arrival in America, including the name of the ship and his initial role in Boston.
8. Why did John Eliot leave the First Church of Boston and settle in Roxbury? What was his role in Roxbury?
9. Describe one of the anecdotes illustrating the character of John Eliot and his wife, Hannah Mumford, highlighting their individual traits and their relationship.
10. What were two significant challenges or controversies John Eliot faced during his early years in the Massachusetts Bay Colony?

**Answer Key:**

1. John Eliot's moniker was "Apostle to the Indians." He received this title for his extensive efforts to evangelize and minister to the Native American population, most notably through his translation of the Bible into the Algonquin language.
2. The three bas-reliefs mentioned are the Mayflower Compact (symbolizing rule of law by consent), the Pilgrims' observance of the Sabbath on Clark's Island (representing freedom of worship), and the founding of Harvard University (a major early educational institution). These are important as they represent foundational principles and events in the establishment of the American colonies.
3. The Pilgrims were separatists who wanted to completely break away from the Anglican Church, while the Puritans sought to purify the Anglican Church from within. Although they later converged, this distinction marked their initial approaches to religious reform.
4. Besides the Bible translation, Eliot founded the Roxbury Latin School (the oldest continuous school in America) and was instrumental in the early integrated school in Jamaica Plain. He also played a role in the establishment of the Indian College at Harvard University.
5. John Eliot was born in Whitford, England, in 1604 to Bennett and Lattice Eliot. He believed it was a great favor from God to have his early life "seasoned with the fear of God, the word and prayer," indicating he had godly parents who instilled religious values in him.
6. Thomas Hooker, a Puritan minister, significantly influenced Eliot's spiritual conversion during the six-year period after Eliot left Cambridge. Eliot lived with Hooker at his school in Little Baddow, where he experienced a profound sense of spiritual awakening.
7. John Eliot arrived in Boston in 1631 on the ship called the Lion, which also carried the wife and children of John Winthrop. Upon arrival, he served as a minister at the First Church of Boston for about a year while their pastor was in England.
8. Eliot left the First Church of Boston because many members of his family from Nazeing had settled in Roxbury. He went to Roxbury and became the teacher (minister) of the newly founded First Church of Roxbury, where he would stay for the majority of his life.
9. One anecdote involves Hannah playing a trick on John by showing him their own cows that had wandered to the front door, and John not recognizing them, illustrating his detachment from household business which he left to Hannah. This highlights Hannah's practical nature and their humorous relationship.
10. Two significant challenges were Eliot's alignment with the orthodox party during the Anne Hutchinson controversy, and the suppression of his book "The Christian Commonwealth" in England due to its democratic principles that were seen as opposing the monarchy.

**Essay Format Questions:**

1. Analyze the factors that contributed to John Eliot's significance as a figure in early American history. Consider his religious work, educational endeavors, and interactions with the Native American population in your response.
2. Discuss the influence of John Eliot's English roots and early experiences on his later ministry and work in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. How did his upbringing and education shape his approach to religion and society?
3. Evaluate the complexities of the early interactions between English settlers and Native Americans, as suggested by the initial support for missionary efforts and the subsequent resistance to Eliot's praying Indian villages.
4. Explore the character and relationship between John Eliot and his wife, Hannah Mumford, based on the anecdotes provided. How did their individual personalities and partnership contribute to Eliot's ministry and impact?
5. Critically assess the early recognition and support for John Eliot's missionary work, considering the motivations of the English settlers and the various perspectives on the Native American population during this period.

**Glossary of Key Terms:**

* **Apostle to the Indians:** A moniker given to John Eliot in recognition of his extensive missionary work among the Native American tribes of New England.
* **Congregationalism:** A form of Protestant church governance in which each local church is independent and self-governing. John Eliot was a strong advocate for this polity.
* **Puritans:** English Protestants in the 16th and 17th centuries who sought to purify the Church of England from what they considered to be Roman Catholic practices.
* **Pilgrims:** English Separatists who broke away from the Church of England and established the Plymouth Colony in America in 1620, seeking religious freedom.
* **Bay Psalm Book:** The first book printed in British North America in 1640, translated into English meter for singing in Puritan churches. John Eliot was one of the translators.
* **Algonquin/Wampanoag Language:** The Native American language into which John Eliot translated the Bible, the first Bible printed in America (1663).
* **Praying Indian Villages:** Native American settlements established by John Eliot and others where the inhabitants adopted Christianity and English customs. Natick was the first and served as a model.
* **Roxbury Latin School:** Founded in 1645 by John Eliot and others, it is the oldest continuously operating school in North America.
* **Harvard Indian College:** An institution established at Harvard University with the aim of educating Native American students. It was supported by John Eliot's efforts.
* **King Philip's War (1675-1676):** A major conflict between Native American tribes and English colonists in New England, which significantly impacted John Eliot's missionary work and the praying Indian villages.

Bottom of Form

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**5. FAQs on Hildebrandt, John Eliot, Session 1, Significance, Birth to Roxbury, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**  
Top of Form

Frequently Asked Questions about the Early Life and Significance of John Eliot

**1. Who was John Eliot and why is he historically significant?**

John Eliot (1604-1690) was one of the first English settlers in America and is best known as the "Apostle to the Indians" for his extensive efforts to Christianize the Native American Algonquin (Wampanoag) tribes in Massachusetts. His significance is underscored by several key achievements, including the translation and printing of the first Bible in America in the Algonquin language in 1663. He also played a role in the translation of the Bay Psalm Book, the first book printed in America, and founded the Roxbury Latin School, the oldest continuously operating school in the United States. Furthermore, Eliot established 14 "praying Indian villages" as centers of Christianized Native American life and governance. His work is memorialized in bas-reliefs at the Boston Congregational Archive and Library and in a mural at the Massachusetts Statehouse, signifying his recognized importance in the early history of the region.

**2. What were John Eliot's early life and education like in England?**

John Eliot was born in Whitford, England, in 1604 and baptized in the Church of St. John the Baptist. His parents, Bennett and Lattice Eliot, were godly and relatively prosperous landowners. His early childhood was spent in Nazeing. Eliot received his formal education at Jesus College, Cambridge University, from 1618 to 1622, where he earned his AB degree. He began a master's program but left due to the plague in 1625 without completing it. Following his time at Cambridge, Eliot became associated with Thomas Hooker, a prominent Puritan minister, whose influence deeply impacted Eliot and is considered by some to be his conversion experience.

**3. When and why did John Eliot come to America, and where did he initially settle?**

John Eliot immigrated to America in 1631, following Thomas Hooker who had arrived earlier. He sailed on the ship "Lion" and arrived in Boston. Initially, he served as a minister at the First Church of Boston for about a year while their pastor was in England. However, in 1632, Eliot moved to Roxbury, where he co-founded and served at the First Church of Roxbury for nearly 60 years. Roxbury became the central base for his ministry and later, his missionary work with the Native Americans.

**4. What was the nature of John Eliot's relationship with his wife, Hannah Mumford?**

John Eliot married Hannah Mumford in September 1632, the first marriage in the Roxbury church. Their marriage lasted over 50 years, and Hannah was known for her hospitality and nursing skills. She was portrayed as a strong and capable partner who managed the household affairs, as Eliot was deeply focused on his ministerial duties and viewed business as incompatible with his office. Anecdotes suggest a warm and humorous relationship, with Hannah sometimes playfully testing Eliot's detachment from worldly matters.

**5. What were some key personal characteristics that defined John Eliot?**

John Eliot was characterized by several notable traits. He was highly practical, drawing spiritual lessons from everyday life. He was described as a "mourning" person, encouraging spiritual introspection. Eliot was temperate, notably choosing water over wine. He was exceptionally hospitable, even welcoming a Jesuit missionary into his home for the winter. Above all, he possessed an incredible work ethic, diligence, and persistence, essential for his monumental task of translating the Bible. Despite his significant achievements, Eliot remained humble, referring to himself as "but a shrub in the wilderness."

**6. How did John Eliot prioritize education, both for the English settlers and the Native Americans?**

Education was a central passion for John Eliot, as he believed it was foundational for the permanence of both his church and his mission to the Native Americans. He was instrumental in founding the Roxbury Latin School in 1645, which remains a prestigious institution to this day. He also established a school in Jamaica Plain that was one of the first integrated schools in America, serving Black, Indigenous, and white students. Furthermore, Eliot played a significant role in the establishment of the Indian College at Harvard University, hoping to educate Native American students. He advocated for widespread schooling and created catechisms for children, emphasizing the importance of early religious instruction.

**7. What were some of the challenges and controversies John Eliot faced during his early ministry?**

During his early years in America, John Eliot was involved in the controversy surrounding Anne Hutchinson in 1637-38, where he aligned himself with the orthodox party against her antinomian views. Another challenge arose from his publication of "The Christian Commonwealth" in England in 1659, which advocated for a form of government based on Exodus 18:25, suggesting elected leaders at various levels. This was perceived as a challenge to the monarchy and was ordered suppressed, marking one of Eliot's "canceled" works. Despite this setback, Eliot later implemented similar principles of communal organization within the "praying Indian villages."

**8. How did the English settlers and the political climate in the early Massachusetts Bay Colony view the conversion of Native Americans?**

Initially, there was a general sentiment among the English settlers, supported by the King's grant and early colonial charters, that one of the principal aims of the settlement was the conversion of the Native American population to Christianity. The early Massachusetts seal even depicted an Indian saying, "Come over and help us," echoing the biblical call for missionary work. Some settlers and religious figures believed the Indians were the lost ten tribes of Israel, further fueling the desire for their conversion. While there was early support, Eliot and others involved in this work also faced resistance from some settlers who clashed with the Native Americans over land use and differing ways of life. The power dynamics within the Native American tribes themselves also presented challenges to the adoption of Christianity and the new social structures proposed by Eliot.

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